

## I. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) A process for the production of an L-amino acid comprising:

a) culturing a coryneform bacterium under conditions suitable for overexpression of the sigE gene having the nucleic acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1; and

(b) isolating the L-amino acid,

wherein overexpression occurs by increasing the copy number of said gene or operatively linking said gene to a promoter.

10-11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 9, wherein said coryneform bacteria have been transformed with a plasmid vector which comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

13-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 9, further comprising overexpressing a *C. glutamicum* gene selected from the group consisting of:

(a) a gene which codes for dihydrodipicolinate synthase,

(b) a gene which codes for glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase,

(c) a gene which codes for triose phosphate isomerase,

(d) a gene which codes for 3-phosphoglycerate kinase,

(e) a gene which codes for glucose 6-phosphate dehydrogenase,

(f) a gene which codes for pyruvate carboxylase,

(g) a gene which codes for malate-quinone oxidoreductase,

(h) a gene which codes for aspartate kinase,

(i) a lysE gene which codes for a protein that exports lysine,

(j) a gene which codes for homoserine dehydrogenase,

(k) a gene which codes for threonine dehydratase,

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- (l) a gene which codes for acetohydroxy-acid synthase, and
- (m) a gene which codes for dihydroxy-acid dehydratase.

16. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 9 wherein the Coryneform bacterium is *C. glutamicum*, the process further comprising deleting a *C. glutamicum* gene selected from the group consisting of:

- (a) a gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate carboxykinase,
- (b) a gene which codes for glucose 6-phosphate isomerase, and
- (c) a gene which codes for pyruvate oxidase.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 9, wherein said coryneform bacteria are of the species *Corynebacterium glutamicum*.

19-20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 9, wherein said L-amino acid is L-lysine.

22. (Previously Presented) A process for the production of an L-amino acid comprising:

- (a) culturing a coryneform bacteria under conditions suitable for overexpression of a nucleic acid comprising nucleotides 302 to 949 of SEQ ID NO: 1; and
  - (b) isolating the L-amino acid
- wherein overexpression occurs by increasing the copy number of said nucleic acid or operatively linking said nucleic acid to a promoter.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) A method for the preparation of L-amino acids, comprising:

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culturing coryneform bacteria, which include an overexpressed sigE gene having a polynucleotide sequence which encodes the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2, in a medium suitable for the expression of sigE to thereby produce L-amino acids wherein overexpression of the sigE gene is accomplished by increasing the copy number of said gene or operatively linking said gene to a promoter.

25. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, further comprising isolating the L-amino acids.

26. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the bacteria have been transformed with a plasmid vector which comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

27. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the coryneform bacteria produce L-lysine.

28. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the bacteria are *Corynebacterium glutamicum*.

29. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 24, further comprising overexpressing a *C. glutamicum* gene selected from the group consisting of:

- (a) a gene which codes for dihydrodipicolinate synthase,
- (b) a gene which codes for glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase,
- (c) a gene which codes for triose phosphate isomerase,
- (d) a gene which codes for 3-phosphoglycerate kinase,
- (e) a gene which codes for glucose 6-phosphate dehydrogenase,
- (f) a gene which codes for pyruvate carboxylase,
- (g) a gene which codes for malate-quinone oxidoreductase,
- (h) a gene which codes for aspartate kinase,
- (i) a lysE gene which codes for a protein that exports lysine,
- (j) a gene which codes for homoserine dehydrogenase,
- (k) a gene which codes for threonine dehydratase,
- (l) a gene which codes for acetohydroxy-acid synthase, and
- (m) a gene which codes for dihydroxy-acid dehydratase.

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30. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 24 wherein the Coryneform bacterium is C. glutamicum, the process further comprising deleting a *C. glutamicum* gene selected from the group consisting of:

- (a) a gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate carboxykinase;
- (b) a gene which codes for glucose 6-phosphate isomerase; and
- (c) a gene which codes for pyruvate oxidase.